

Engagements—Up! + ASCFG Regional Events + More



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TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2024

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COMING UP THIS WEEK:

Mid-February Farm Update
Wedding Proposals—Up!
Slow Flowers Insights,
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Green Career Week



Ball Culture Guide

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SEED GERMINATION

By JIM NAU

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Mid-February Farm Update





Valentine's Day flowers from our farm. Anemone and ranunculus are crowd-pleasers!

Valentine's Day is the official start to flower season on our farm. Demand exceeds supply this time of year. Rationing ranunculus is a tough gig. They are our most sought-after flower, and customers get cranky when they don't get first dibs. In this scenario, transparency is key, and since we deliver to flower shops near and far, it's easier for folks to understand why we stay closer to home when the season starts.

High demand for early season flowers fuels the need for more covered growing space. But given the price of steel, that is a little way off in our future yet. If anyone has a pulse on when/if greenhouse kits will go back to "normal," [let me know!](#)

In addition to sending out our first flowers of the season, we are also looking ahead to the busy planting season. Rich is working on a dahlia planter and a couple other nifty homemade implements that will make the busy season go smoother.

Also, fingers crossed we get the plants we ordered! We just received news last week that dahlia tubers may be in short supply this season from our supplier. The Netherlands received lots of rain from October through January and yields are substantially less than anticipated. Each season has its own challenges, and everyone (including your suppliers) are doing the best they can. I just encourage everyone to be patient and kind when things don't quite go as planned. A little grace and kindness go a long way, and your suppliers and sales representatives are important relationships to cultivate—especially if you plan to choose to farm for your entire career! If nothing else, my plan is just roll with the punches and see how the dust settles. Fingers crossed all of last season's dahlias overwintered well and we can conjure a creative plan to multiply them if needed.

With all of this going on, I still try to live life and enjoy the season at hand and hope for the best. In this edition of *Bloom Beat* we are going to talk about wedding trends, ASCFG events and more.

With all that being said, let's talk shop!



Wedding Proposals Expected to Rise in 2024

The wedding industry has been on a rollercoaster ride for the last three years. Ultimately, many experts would say the green industry flourished as a result of COVID—my farm included. Many couples rescheduled their 2020 wedding day to 2021 and beyond. Not to mention wedding venues and professionals, which were inundated with new inquiries from new couples. Now the industry is starting to stabilize and return to pre-pandemic demand or even slightly less. We all knew it would be a matter of time before the dust would settle from the COVID pandemic boom. Some florists and event planners have a lighter 2024 event season compared to 2022 and 2023.

One of the ways to take a pulse on the state of the wedding industry is to look at the sales trends in other industries. According to Signet, the largest diamond jewelry retailer in the world, expects an increase in engagements for 2024. The company reported decreased sales during the last quarter of 2023. This is due to the engagement gap of the last few years. Young relationships withered and faded because of the 2020 lockdown and dating in general suffered during that time. Less dating means fewer engagements years down the road. According to

Jamie Singleton, Signet's Group President and Chief Consumer Officer, "Dating is up 8% to pre-COVID, and we don't see that behavior going away."

If your 2024 wedding bookings look sparse, there is hope for 2025 and beyond, but the size and scale of events may be different. The *New York Times* speculates Signet's drop in sales in 2023 may also be due to inflation, lower tax refunds, and fear of a recession, all of which could be factors in consumer spending on wedding rings. Signet predicts there will be 500,000 more engagements between 2024 and 2026. But budget-conscious consumers may opt to hold on to their dollars and spend less on engagement rings—which may correlate with their wedding budget. It's too soon to know for sure, but arming yourself with a little bit of knowledge and following industry trends can go a long way.

If you have open dates for 2024, try reaching out to vendors you work with (such as caterers, photographers, and so on). and mention that you have openings in your schedule. Sometimes it only takes a referral to get the inquiries rolling in again. Marketing on Facebook and Instagram never hurts, either.

If you are feeling like your wedding inquiries are in the doldrums, you aren't alone. But you'll want to create a marketing plan to capitalize on the newly engaged couples in 2024. Five-year wedding vow renewals are also becoming a trend. Get creative! Tater and I would love to **hear your thoughts** and solutions!



Slow Flowers Floral Insights and Industry Forecast

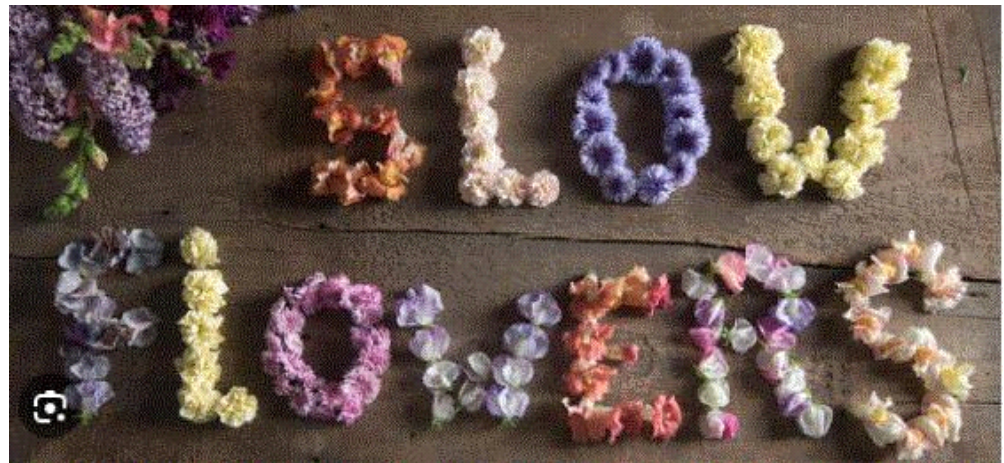


Photo courtesy of Johnny's Selected Seeds and Slow Flowers.

The **Slow Flowers Society**, which has the goal of "Inspiring the floral industry and its consumers to embrace local, seasonal and sustainable flowers," released its 2024 Floral Insights and Industry Forecast report earlier this year. Debra Prinzing and the folks at **BLOOM Imprint** have been writing these forecasts since 2015. The report calls for "Simplicity" for 2024.

According to Debra, this means "making seasonality and sustainability more central for their enterprises. In the larger cultural context, we believe that people are 'seeking less' as a response to excessive consumption, commercialism, and the smothering presence of technology."

Debra and coauthor Robin Avni explore several insights ranging from gardening, art, design, and environmental concepts that flower farmers, consumers and floral professionals will deem important and influence their design aesthetic for 2024.

Native Flora. Increased interest in incorporating native plants into arrangements. Unique textures, using plants with multiple seasons of interests, foliage, flowers, and seed pods. Using native plants is a nod to climate change.

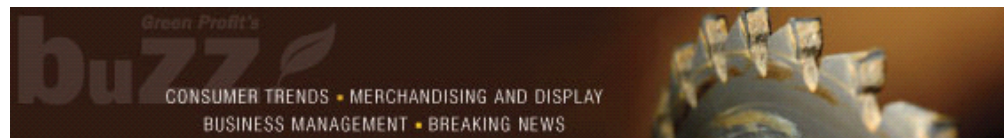
The Garden Eclectic. Designs will have multiple sensory experiences, like texture and fragrance. Garden roses and fragrant flowers and foliage will continue to gain traction.

Florist Hack Attacks. Florists are moving away from single-use plastic vessels. Florists are starting to trend away from chemical- and petroleum-based items in their studios. Florists will eliminate or reduce the use of invasive plants in their designs. Biodynamic and regenerative farming practices for flower farmers and farmer-florists are becoming more common. Homemade compost teas and using natural amendments for flower production are in.

Floral Literacy. More industries will incorporate flowers into their designs, such as upscale clothing. People will continue to find ways to incorporate flowers into their everyday lives. Flower farmers and florists help customer connect with the environment with these new design aesthetics.

Read the entire report [HERE](#).

After reading the report, Tater and I think there are signs of hope that designers are moving on from the blush and white wedding palette. We think you can glean some great information from this report. [Let us know](#) what you think!



ASCFG Regional Events

[The Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers](#) (ASCFG) will host seven regional conferences in 2024. These are a touch different than the national conference held in St. Louis in 2023 (but equally as exciting!). Regional conferences will be two-day events and are designed to “celebrate and highlight local excellence and expertise and to connect ASCFG members with other growers in their regional community.” Be sure to check out the website to see what conferences are near you or attend them all! Program registration and itinerary for each of these events will be available soon.

In the meantime, if you are not an ASCFG member, I encourage you to join. Not only will you get member discounts for association events and resources, they have tons of educational content available online in their members-only library, a complimentary subscription to *The Cut Flower Quarterly* and much more. Tater and I will let you all know when registration opens up for these events, but in the meantime, check out their [website](#) for more information.

Green Career Week



Mark your calendars! **Seed Your Future's Green Career Week** is March 4-8. Green Career Week is a national initiative led by green industry leaders (like you!) to increase awareness of our industry among young people. Not only do you get to showcase opportunities at your farm and share your story, but you also get to build relationships with local universities, colleges and high schools. It's a creative way to engage with the youth in your community—and who knows, you might get a budding flower farmer to join your crew this summer! It's a win-win for everyone.

Tater and I hope you will consider participating, because the future of our industry depends on all of us engaging with the next generation. Tap **HERE** to register your farm and receive a free resource guide and template to help you successfully connect with high school vocational programs in your area.

Enthusiastically,

Lindsay 

Lindsay Daschner (and **Tater**)
Editor-at-Large—*Bloom Beat*
Owner—Forget-Me-Not Farms

This email was received by 6,281 of your fellow fresh-cut flower growers!

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